

**RIVER THAMES STAND UP PADDLE BOARD RISK ASSESSMENT by Michelle Ellison and Melanie Joe**

Form of Transport	Paddle board (x2)							
Dates Applicable for this application	17th - 26th July 2015 (24th - 26th July, for Putney to Southend)							
Project Description	Paddle board the length of the River Thames from Thames Head to Southend (Melanie Joe and Michelle Ellison)							
Main Safety Support	Harry Whelan with a current LIKE qualification, will guide us in his kayak between Wandsworth Bridge and the Thames Barrier. A 5.4metre Humber Rigid Inflatable support boat for the journey from Tower Bridge to Southend, with the Helmsmen from Gravesend Sea Cadets in charge on both days being RYA Power Boat Instructor qualified and are also or have been members of the Gravesend Lifeboat crew. The support boat is fitted with AIS, GMDSS VHF marine Radio, Echo Sounder & Electronic Chart Display.							
Qualification	TSK Level 1 (for both Melanie Joe and Michelle Ellison)							
Prepared By	Mel Joe and Michelle Ellison							
Please Note	In addition to the risk assessment below, a dynamic risk assessment will always be carried out while on the water to ensure safety. Trips on water will always be with the outgoing tide, so foreshore will be exposed. The most suitable recovery sites will therefore be noted and used where necessary along the route.							
Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Factor						
5 = Extremely High	5 = Fatality or Major Injury	0-4 = LOW proceed						
4 = Very Likely	4 = Serious impact or injury or significant loss	5-7 = MEDIUM proceed						
3 = Likely	3 = Minor or moderate impact or injury	8-11 = HIGH do not proceed						
2 = Unlikely	2 = Minor impact or injury	12-15 = VERY HIGH do not proceed						
1 = Highly Unlikely	1 = Minimal impact	16-25 = EXTREMELY HIGH do not proceed						
Risk Description	Likelihood	Consequences	Risk Factor	Mitigation Control Measure	Likelihood	Consequences	Residual Risk	
Equipment	Loss of board	1	1	1	Wear a waist strap attached to the board at all times when in the water. Implement the rescue technique* for returning to the board.	1	1	1
	Loss of paddle	2	2	4	Paddle like on a surf board in order to retrieve the paddle if possible and close to board. Or alternatively the support crew retrieve the paddle. If they are unable to retrieve the paddle safely, use the spare paddle carried by the support crew.	1	1	1
	Dropping map / passage plan or phone in the water	2	3	6	Carry two copies of the map / passage plan (one on each board in a waterproof clear case. Carry two phones (one on each board) in a waterproof carry case around neck. Plus carried by the support crew also.	1	1	1
Other water users	Collisions with others moving on the water	2	4	8	Ensure the passage plan is implemented. Harry Whelan to navigate us safely through Central London, to ensure we remain safe and away from the large vessels on the water. Look around frequently. Observe the main traffic flow and position away from it. Stay on the south side and avoid navigational arches where possible, as directed by Harry Whelan. Avoid paddling in lower tide. Wear PDF at all times. Carry and use a whistle when appropriate. Email all ferry companies prior to departure, of the expected route of passage, dates and times due on the water, to ensure they are aware of paddle boarders being on the river at that time. Radio the VTS and all water craft prior to departure, and every 30mins (or as necessary) to update them on our location. Be aware when entering the Lower District that much larger commercial vessels will be encountered. Good listening watch on VHF Ch 68/14 as appropriate by safety boat to maintain awareness of vessels manoeuvring to and from berths on the south side of the river to avoid potential conflict.	2	2	4
	Collisions with moored barges and pontoons	2	4	8	Ensure the passage plan is implemented. Look around frequently. Observe all moored barges, other crafts and pontoons and give wide berth. Avoid paddling in lower tide.	1	2	4
Visability	Incident caused by limited visibility of SUP from other crafts, due to size of boards on the river or fog	3	3	9	Ensure the passage plan is implemented. Paddle with an experienced kayaker (Harry Whelan) to ensure greater visibility. Stay on the south side and avoid navigational arches where possible. Carry a white light in each PDF. Follow guidance issued by PLA "Be Safe Be Seen" and "Stand Up Paddle boarding on the tidal Thames 2013".	2	3	6
Wash	Dealing with wash, high riverside walls, slipping and falling off the board when in open water	3	2	6	Ensure always a safe distance from shallow water and riverside walls, a safe distance from boats and other craft on the water. Whenever there is wash, always go onto knees as this is the most stable position on the paddle board and will significantly reduce any likelihood of falling into the water. Where possible paddle straight through the wash. Ensure there is enough distance between boards.	1	1	1
Submerged items	Entrapment, pinning injuries	2	3	6	Avoid paddling close to river banks. Knowledge of the water flows. Look around frequently. Not paddling alone - so will have immediate response and support should their be an incident.	1	2	2
Tides	Inappropriate conditions	3	3	9	Check the tides. Ensure passage plan is implemented. Regular assessment of conditions - if unsafe to proceed then re-evaluate the passage plan. Awareness of tidal times and associated direction of flow.	3	2	6
	Ebb tide flag system	3	3	9	Ensure the ebb flag system is taken into consideration during the trip. If a yellow flag, reassess the passage plan and consider a shorter route. If a red flag, paddle to the safest exit point on the passage plan, until it is safe to go back onto the water.	3	2	6
Wind Direction	Being blown against the tide	3	2	6	Check the weather forecast everyday. Use most appropriate and efficient paddle technique when paddling into wind.	3	2	6
	Paddling with strong gust	3	2	6	Check the weather forecast daily (met office) for wind direction and gust. If gust = 30 or higher, reassess the passage plan and paddle to the safest exit point on the passage plan, until the level of gust reduces.	3	1	3
Weather	Hypothermia or immersion exposure	3	3	9	Check the weather forecast everyday. Dress appropriately for the conditions, including the application of sunscreen. Monitor ourselves and each other in colder conditions (if this occurs). Carry an emergency blanket and first aid kit. Reassess passage plan if conditions worsen.	2	2	4
Water	Water quality	3	3	9	If becoming separated from the board, keep head and mouth above the water. Do not ingest the water where possible. Wash hands before eating. Shower after paddling where possible. Cover all wounds/scrapes with waterproof dressings if required. Use alcohol gel if no clean water source.	3	2	6
	Drowning, as it is an inherent risk in all water activities.	2	5	10	PDF worn at all times on the water. All paddle boarders can swim. Ensure the passage plan is implemented. Carry a VHF. Implement rescue technique if coming off the board in the water. A safety boat will assist in rescue as required.	1	3	3
	Sewage	3	3	9	Check the release times of waste into the Thames, to ensure not paddling through that section of the Thames, at that time.	2	2	4
Rubbish	Getting a cut / open wound, other injuries, environment	2	3	6	Wear water shoes at all times while getting on / off the water. Carry a first aid kit at all times. Wash with clean water wherever possible. Avoid debris.	1	2	2
Personal	Pulling / straining muscles	3	3	9	Ensure adequate training is complete prior to trip. Ensure during the trip that there are regular rest breaks and changes of paddle techniques. Ensure adequate hydration and nutrition through the trip.	2	2	4
	Fatigue and exhaustion	3	3	9	Take regular breaks. Take suitable food and drink for the trip. Monitors ourselves and each other for signs of fatigue and/or exhaustion. Re-evaluate passage plan and adjust accordingly.	2	2	4
	Slipping and falling at the river edge	2	2	4	When departing the river edge, ensure always on knees for stability and slow paddle to a stop. When arriving at the river edge, ensure always on knees for stability and only stand when in clear open water. Ensure there is enough distance between boards.	1	1	1
Wildlife	Swan attack	1	2	2	Avoid / wide berth.	1	2	2
Fisherman	Fishing line from fisherman on the side of the river	2	2	4	Observe fisherman on the river and ensure wide berth, so not to get caught in their line. Carry a small safety knife to use, if the board gets caught in a line.	2	1	2
Day 8 - Day 10: Teddington to Tilbury Docks / Gravesend	In addition to the risks identified above, when paddling this section of the river the other particular hazards to note are:  Wind speed and direction  Choppiness of the water	3	3	9	At the start of the paddle day, check the weather forecast for wind direction and speed. Notify London VTS of departure and route of travel. Carry out a dynamic risk assessment taking into consideration the risks identified.  Prior to departure, discuss with Harry Whelan and the Support Boat crew (dependent on what we will be supported by on the day), the route, the tide, weather and potential exit points based on these areas and their experience and expertise of the river.  If the wind is less than 20MPH, visibility is 3 miles or greater and gust is below 30, the weather conditions are suitable to proceed. If the conditions are outside of these ranges, following a dynamic risk assessment, proceed to the nearest exit as guided by Harry Whelan or the Support Boat.  The Support Boat will be a 5.4metre Humber Rigid Inflatable. The Helmsmen in charge on both days will be RYA Power Boat Instructor qualified and are also or have been members of the Gravesend Lifeboat crew. The boat is fitted with GMDSS VHF marine Radio, Echo Sounder & Electronic Chart Display.	3	2	4
Day 11: Tilbury Docks / Gravesend to Southend (Option A)	In addition to the risks identified above, when paddling this section of the river the particular hazards to note are:  Crossing three shipping lanes at Sea Reach No.7, 0.3 nautical miles wide  Wind speed and direction  Possible poor visibility  Choppiness of the water	3	3	9	At the start of the paddle day, check the weather forecast for wind direction and speed. Notify London VTS of departure and route of travel. Carry out a dynamic risk assessment taking into consideration the risks identified.  If the wind direction is in a SW direction, less than 20MPH, visibility is 3 miles or greater and gust is below 30, the weather conditions are suitable to proceed. If the conditions are outside of these ranges, following a dynamic risk assessment, proceed to paddle the route of Option B.  Prior to, but when approaching Sea Reach No.7, carry out a dynamic risk assessment. If areas of risk are within the identified limits, the Safety Boat to call London VTS to notify them of our position and request permission to cross the shipping lanes at Sea Reach No.7. Provide a verbal position report to London VTS at quarter past and quarter to the hour such that they can add our position to the hourly and half hourly broadcast.  If permission is granted, paddle board the width of the shipping crossing on our knees, to ensure the greatest stability (which on knees is, as stable as a kayak) and also the fastest paddling stroke due to the lower centre of gravity and lesser distance for the paddle to travel.  The crossing would be taking place on an outgoing tide approximately 2 1/5 hours before low tide, and at 0.3km wide, would take approximately 15-20 minutes to cross.  If while crossing the shipping lane a large vessel comes into view, use the Safety Boat to tow both paddle boards out of the shipping lane and away from any potential collision.  The Support Boat will be a 5.4metre Humber Rigid Inflatable. The Helmsmen in charge on both days will be RYA Power Boat Instructor qualified and are also or have been members of the Gravesend Lifeboat crew. The boat is fitted with GMDSS VHF marine Radio, Echo Sounder & Electronic Chart Display.	3	2	4
Day 11: Tilbury Docks / Gravesend to Allhallows (Option B)	In addition to the risks identified above:  Wind speed and direction  Possible poor visibility  Choppiness of the water	3	3	7	At the start of the paddle day, check the weather forecast for wind direction and speed. Notify London VTS of departure and route of travel. Carry out a dynamic risk assessment taking into consideration the risks identified, and adjust the passage plan accordingly. This may result in resting at the safest and closest point on the foreshore, while the weather conditions improve, or using the Safety Boat to tow both paddle boards to the end point.	3	2	4

\*Rescue Technique Placing body width ways over the board, swinging legs around, so length ways on the board, and coming up to your knees.